

HALLOWEEN MINI-PLANNER
DRAFT LETTER TO EDITOR
490 Words



Dear Editor:

Just around the corner is one of those holidays both young and old enjoy celebrating -- a time for taking the kids out trick or treating -- and for many adults, a time for elaborate costume parties full of fun, frivolity and often alcohol use.

But since Halloween is on a Sunday this year, some party animals will be out in force celebrating throughout the October 29-31 holiday weekend. This makes the Halloween weekend a very dangerous time on our nation's roads because of impaired driving.

In fact, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), two-thirds (66.6%) of all highway fatalities at Halloween in 2003 were alcohol-related.

But such Halloween nightmares don't just come from the death, disfigurement and disability caused by impaired drivers and alcohol-related crashes. Real nightmares can also come from the dozens of other serious consequences that face those who don't plan ahead and designate a sober driver before the big Halloween celebration.

The consequences if arrested while driving impaired are serious and real. The prospect of jail time, the suspension or loss of your driver's license, higher insurance rates, the embarrassment and humiliation of telling friends, family and employers, plus dozens of unanticipated expenses for attorney fees, fines and court costs, car towing and repairs, time away from work, and many others costs should stop you cold before even considering driving your car, truck or motorcycle while impaired.

But avoiding these Halloween nightmares is also pretty simple if you remember to take a few important steps:

- 1) Plan ahead and designate a sober driver BEFORE you go out partying;

- 2) Don't even think about getting behind the wheel of your vehicle if you've been out drinking;
- 3) Take the keys and never let a friend leave your sight if you think they are about to drive while impaired;
- 4) If impaired, call a taxi – use mass transit -- or get a sober friend or family member to come and get you;
- 5) Or just stay where you are and sleep it off until you are sober;
- 6) And if you are hosting the party this year, make sure all of your guests leave with a sober driver.

Driving a car, truck or motorcycle while impaired this Halloween could quickly turn into a very real nightmare. Plan ahead and do not allow yourself, young or old, to fall into the age-old trap that “It will never happen to me.”

It can happen. It has happened. It will happen.

In 2003, more than 17,000 Americans lost their lives in alcohol-related highway crashes.

Drinking and driving while impaired is simply not worth the risk -- of killing yourself or someone else – of the hassles and expenses sure to come – of creating the kind of personal nightmare that could last your entire lifetime.

Don't let your Halloween turn into a nightmare. Please plan ahead -- and designate a sober driver before all Halloween festivities.

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